

THE NUBIAN SKELETON THROUGH 4000 YEARS. By Ole Vagn Nielsen. 128 pp. and 20 plates. Andelsbogtrykkeriet i Odense, Denmark. 1970.

Nielsen's analysis of skeletal material from 1546 Nubian graves was his Ph.D. dissertation and is far better than average in its thoroughness and meticulous statistical treatment. He begins by briefly acquainting the reader with Nubia and its known and conjectured past. Then he sketchily reviews and points out some of the inadequacies of previous studies of Nubian skeletal material. He describes his own material which comes from eight different cultural contexts (called the A-group, C-group, Pharaonic group, Meroitic group, X-group, Christian group, the Muhammedan group and a group of undated skeletons) spanning a time period from about 3,000 B.C. to 1,100 or 1,200 A.D. His major undertaking is to compare and contrast the metrical characteristics of the seven dated groups. First, he tests the samples for normality and concludes that they present neither too much, nor too little variation to be considered representative of real populations. He also establishes that at no time were there significant genetic differences between males and females — indicating that in all the groups both sexes came from the same population. Thus there is no evidence for foreign conquerors coming into the area and mating with local women.

Using multivariate analysis, Nielsen concludes that all of the groups are very similar, with the C-group being somewhat distinct from the others. He also suggests that "Negroid" characteristics are absent from the earlier Nubian populations, but they appear in later samples in his series — though none of the groups could be described as Negroes.

Nielsen also devotes some space to a comparison of non-metric, discrete skull traits, but concludes that they are of little use in comparing very closely related populations such as the ones he dealt with.

A brief description of several skeletal pathologies concludes his work.

Anthropologists interested in African prehistory and history will find this book interesting. It suggests that for 4000

years the populations of Nubia were genetically very similar to each other. Furthermore, Nielsen concludes on reasonably sound evidence, that the Nubian Pharaonic graves probably contained Egyptians even though others have argued that they contained remains of the contemporaneous C-group people.

The author is to be commended for explicitly describing his metrical and statistical methods, and for providing a great deal of concrete data in his innumerable tables.

The twenty plates provide some excellent illustrations of skeletal pathologies, but one wishes that Nielsen would have illustrated a representative selection of normal Nubian skulls as well.

The very fastidious reader will be annoyed with the translator's (Nouchiravan Dianaty) tendency to confuse prepositions and force English into an awkward Germanic syntax. However, in no case do these minor problems lead to misunderstanding, and anyone interested in African populations will find this a valuable book.

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HUMAN DIVERSITY. By Alexander Alland, Jr. 220 pp. Columbia University Press, New York. 1971. \$7.50.

The title of this book surely claims too much since the work itself does not contain a survey of the dimensions of human diversity. Furthermore, despite the admirable statement early in the book that "Classification for the sake of classification has given way to the analysis of process," there is only spotty concern for the actual (or inferred) evolutionary processes by which the currently visible spectrum of human diversity arose. It would appear that Alland's principal interest lies in examining the approaches that other scholars have taken towards interpreting human variation. In particular, he uses the book to display his opposition to the approach of Carleton S. Coon as found in the *Origin of Races* and *The Living Races of Man* and to the approach of Arthur R. Jensen in his controversial monograph on race and intelli-

gence in the *Harvard Educational Review* (Winter, '69). Alland's book, then, is really an extended dual book review with background chapters on "Basic Genetics," behavioral genetics, and "The Sociology of Race."

Alland's basic orientation, clearly expressed right at the beginning, is that "race as a concept is valid only in sociological discourse." A growing number of biological anthropologists would view this with approval, and it neatly sets the tone for his critique of Coon and Jensen. Where the attack on Coon's views is concerned, Alland demonstrates that he thoroughly grasps the theoretical approach of the "clinal school." Since this reviewer might be regarded as a charter member of the "clinal school," the reader might expect to see some manifestations of enthusiasm. However, I can only respond with a scant two cheers. *Human Diversity* displays admirable intentions, commendable grasp and lamentable execution.

The chapter on "The Fossil Background and the Origin of Races" has so many errors in it that it can only bring discredit to those whose position it purports to represent. Australopithecine brain size does *not* exceed that of modern apes; Neanderthals were *not* originally considered an aberrant form; Fontchevade *cannot* be placed firmly with modern form; the assumption is *not* widely held that modern man appeared earlier in Europe than elsewhere; Swanscombe does *not* closely resemble modern Caucasoids; and so on and so on. There is an ample literature on this for which the citation of out-of-date secondary sources is no substitute.

The chapter on genetics is too brief to be of use to the uninitiated and of no use to those who already know the basics. Crucial areas such as the problem of articulating classical with molecular genetics cannot be passed off by suggesting that the classical gene controls the synthesis of a complete protein molecule or a complete segment of a complex protein molecule. In general, judging from the number of omissions, inaccuracies, misspellings and facile generalizations, it would appear that the book was written "off the top of the head" in the absence

of adequate sources and then turned over to somebody else for proof-reading.

The last chapter, "Intelligence, Intelligence Tests, and Intelligence Testers" — dealing with Jensen — comes across a little better, but even here, the treatment of heritability will be completely incomprehensible to the uninitiated. The algebra is actually quite simple and it would have taken little expansion to explain it so that all could understand, but the effort simply is not made. This is a pity because it weakens a chapter which is probably more complete than any other in the book. One of the more interesting points made is the citation of a study demonstrating that the conclusions of intelligence testers "may serve as better predictors of the inherent prejudice of psychologists and sociologists than of any real differences or similarities between groups."

The subject is obviously of importance to more than just anthropologists. Surely it deserved more care and effort than was apparently expended in the writing of *Human Diversity*.

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EXPLORATIONS IN MATHEMATICAL ANTHROPOLOGY. By Paul Kay. xxvii and 286 pp. MIT Press, Cambridge. 1971. \$12.00.

This is a collection of papers about formal and mathematical approaches to topics in social anthropology. Most were originally presented at the 1966 meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The papers are of uneven quality; the most persistent fault is excessive but unclear verbiage. The editor has alleviated this problem in part by his excellent introductions to each paper.

This book, as well as several similar ones recently published, foreshadow a growing concern with this kind of approach to social anthropology. Physical anthropologists by their training are likely to be familiar not only with these techniques but with the spirit with which they should be used. This is a field which